



**City of Northampton, Massachusetts
Planning and Development**

City Hall, 210 Main Street, Room 11
Northampton, MA 01060

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**Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan
Request for Proposals
BIDS DUE: 2:00 PM, TUESDAY OCTOBER 31, 2006**

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Northampton is requesting planning proposals from qualified consultants or consulting teams to complete *Sustainable Northampton*, a comprehensive plan for the City of Northampton. The plan will have a twenty-year horizon and be developed around themes of community sustainability.

Much of the preliminary work on the plan has already been completed including: formation of active advisory committee, public input, and data gathering, and incomplete draft of goals and objectives. The consultant's role is to take the large volume of work already completed, identify and fill any gaps, assist in resolving conflicts and, work with appropriate committees and the community to create the final plan.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Project Location

Northampton is a vibrant community of 30,000 residents located in Western Massachusetts. It has a successful downtown, a vibrant arts community, and a diverse and active business and residential community. Northampton prides itself on being a progressive community and has a long successful history of planning and plan implementation. For more information about Northampton see www.northamptonma.gov.

B. Sustainable Northampton

In June 2005, Mayor Mary Clare Higgins initiated a comprehensive plan for the City of Northampton with a sustainability focus. A Steering Committee was established to oversee and guide the plan consisting of representatives from City boards, City staff, and community groups. The Office of Planning & Development obtained public and private grants to launch the Sustainable Northampton Planning process:

- American Institute of Architects – A Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) lead a public input process and prepared a document including an assessment of current conditions, a vision for a sustainable future, and recommended strategies.
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) researched and analyzed sustainable community indicators.
- Donahue Institute (UMass) collected economic data and prepared a summary memo.
- VHB prepared a briefing paper on form-based zoning.

- Edith Netter is assisting the city in preparing a new transfer of development rights and 40R smart growth overlay district zoning ordinance

In March and April of 2006, the City held nine focus groups and neighborhood meetings with the assistance of Walter Cudnohovsky Associates to obtain public input on the following questions:

- Characteristics and community values that should guide Northampton
- Social, economic, and/or physical changes that have most affected the community
- Areas of conflict among various goals and visions for a sustainable Northampton
- Key areas of concern around sustainability
- Key actions, policies, or infrastructure improvements needed to support a sustainable vision.

In January 2006, the City distributed a survey to every household via the annual census resulting in over 3000 responses. Those responses have been collated and summarized in charts and tables.

More information about the Sustainable Northampton process and copies of documents produced thus far may be viewed at:

<http://www.northamptonma.gov/aboutNorthampton/Sustainability%5FPlan/>

C. Pertinent Planning Documents

Previously adopted or prepared City plans that are relevant to the Sustainable Northampton Plan include, but are not limited to:

- Vision 2020
- Open Space & Recreation Plan (adopted 2005 as part of the comprehensive plan)
- EO 418 Community Development Plan
- Meadows Land Use Plan (adopted 2005 as part of the comprehensive plan)
- Northampton/Easthampton Economic Development Strategic Plan
- Mayor's Economic Development Work Plan
- Central Business District Parking Needs Study
- Downtown Plan, Florence Plan
- Northampton State Hospital Plan
- Rt. 10 Business Park Conceptual Plan
- Historic Preservation Plan
- Cultural Plan
- Transportation Plan (adopted 2005 as part of the comprehensive plan)
- Corridor Plans

A summary of these plans culling out the primary goals, policies, and actions will be provided to the consultant. The consultant should assume that the policies and recommendations from these plans will carry over into the Sustainability Plan unless explicitly revised during the sustainability public process. City plans can be found at the following links:

- <http://www.northamptonma.gov/opd/Visioning%5Fand%5FPlanning/>
- <http://www.northamptonma.gov/opd/Environment%5Fand%5FOpen%5FSpace/>
- <http://www.northamptonma.gov/opd/Sustainable%5FTransportation/>

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The consultant will create a framework for the Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan document, write the document, define options for solving conflicts that have been identified through the public input process thus far, facilitate public meetings to present the draft and final plan, and prepare the layout and graphics for the final plan. This work shall be performed with input from the Sustainable Northampton Steering Committee, Planning Board, other City boards, the public, and City staff. Specific tasks will include:

1. Prepare draft and final versions of the Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan including text, layout, and graphics. The draft plan must focus primarily on visions statements, goals and policies, and must include strategies and actions that were clearly articulated at previous public meetings or are included in existing City plans. The final plan should include all elements including: (the consultant will make recommendations on the preferred language and organization):
 - a. Vision statements
 - b. Goals and policies based on data, sustainable vision, public opinion
 - c. Strategies and actions
 - d. Measurable benchmarks to evaluate future progress
 - e. An implementation plan and schedule
 - f. Data and success stories to highlight and document key points (Northampton success stories and data already collected by the City will be provided to the consultant. The plan may identify additional data that needs to be collected.)
 - g. Land Use Plan and Map (prepared by steering committee/Planning Board/other city boards/staff)
 - h. Other maps (prepared by City staff with input from consultant)
 - i. Plan elements as identified in the attached list.
 - j. Guided throughout by the three core principles of sustainable environment, economy, and social equity.
2. Attend Steering Committee meetings to:
 - a. Gain Steering Committee input in preparing the plans.
 - b. Identify conflicts in vision, goals, policies and present potential resolutions for discussion by the Steering Committee.
 - c. The Steering Committee meets twice per month on the second and fourth Mondays. Special working meetings can be arranged if necessary. The Consultant should propose the number of meetings necessary with the Steering Committee to prepare the draft and final versions of the plan. A minimum of three meetings with the Steering Committee and one meeting with the Planning Board is anticipated as guidance to the consultant, but the goal is that maximum public and board participation.
3. Devise a plan that is complete and is adopted or endorsed by the Steering Committee, the Planning Board, and City Council. The final plan will be considered complete only upon these adoptions or endorsements.
4. Facilitate public meetings to review the draft and final plans:
 - a. Attend and facilitate two public meetings on the draft plan. Two separate meetings are anticipated to ensure the widest possible participation from the

- public. The public meetings should provide time to discuss conflicts in goals and to gather public input on strategies and actions for the final plan.
- b. Attend and facilitate one public meeting on the final plan.
5. Provide guidance to Steering Committee and staff on the design and layout of the final document to ensure that it is succinct, coherently organized into one consistent voice and format, has graphic design interest, is easy to read and understand, is generally accessible to the public, and can be posted on our website in a user-friendly format.
 6. Synthesize and integrate the following information into the Plan:
 - a. Existing partially completed draft goals and vision statements currently under discussion by the Steering Committee.
 - b. Previously adopted or prepared City plans as listed above. A summary of these plans culling out the primary goals, policies, and actions will be provided to the consultant. The goal is to merge existing plans into the Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan to create a consistent voice, update elements based on input received during the Sustainable Northampton Planning process, and create consistency between plan elements. Some existing plans are very current and have been recently adopted. Three of the plans were adopted in 2005 as part of the comprehensive plan: Transportation Plan, Open Space & Recreation Plan, and Meadows Plan. The consultant should assume that the policies and recommendations from all of plans, especially the most recent plans, will carry over into the Sustainability Plan unless explicitly revised during the sustainability public process. City plans can be found at the following links:
<http://www.northamptonma.gov/opd/Visioning%5Fand%5FPlanning/>
<http://www.northamptonma.gov/opd/Environment%5Fand%5FOpen%5FSpace/>
<http://www.northamptonma.gov/opd/Sustainable%5FTransportation/>
 - c. Other non-City community plans, including but not limited to the Latino Agenda.
 - d. Other City efforts that may be completed during the Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Planning process (a climate protection/energy plan for which a funding request is pending).
 - e. AIA SDAT Report (incorporating recommendations agreed upon by the Steering Committee).
 - f. Sustainable Northampton briefing papers and data collection – VHB, Donahue Institute Economic Analysis, PVPC Community Indicators (will be provided to consultant).
 - g. Public comments received during the Sustainable Northampton neighborhood and focus group meetings. (The consultant will be provided a document prepared by the Steering Committee summarizing the public comments organized by common themes.)
 - h. Sustainable Northampton survey responses. (The responses have been collated and summarized into charts and tables.) The Steering Committee has discussed highlighting community responses in appropriate sections of the plan.
 - i. Input from Steering Committee, Planning Board, Housing Partnership, other City boards, public comment, and City staff.
 - j. The consultant's recommendations based on knowledge of sustainable planning principles and drawing on the experience of other sustainability and comprehensive plans in other communities.

IV. FEE & SCHEDULE FOR CONSULTANT SERVICES

The maximum budget for this process is \$45,000 and proposals above this limit will not be accepted. 30% of the fee shall be payable based on consultant's billing on a monthly basis during the data collection phase of the project. 30% shall be payable based on consultant's billing during the draft plan phase of the project. 20% shall be payable upon submission of a final plan acceptable to the steering committee. The final 20% shall be payable upon adoption or endorsement by the Planning Board and City Council.

Project Timeline and Review Process (Dates are estimates unless noted as a deadline.)

Distribute RFP	September 27, 2006
Proposal Submission Deadline	October 31, 2006
Review Proposals and Select Finalists	November 3, 2006
Complete Interviews of Finalists if Applicable	November 20, 2006
Award Contract	November 22, 2006
Execute Contract	November 30, 2006
Complete all Work Products	March 31, 2007

V. CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS & EVALUATION CRITERIA

To qualify for selection all proposals must be received by October 31, 2006 and include the information specified in Section VI – Submission Requirements. All proposals will be reviewed in accordance with MGL Chapter 30B and final selection will be based upon an evaluation and analysis of the information and materials required under the Request for Proposal. Proposals that meet the minimum criteria will be reviewed for responses to the comparative evaluation criteria. The committee will assign a rating of Highly Advantageous, Advantageous, or Not Advantageous to each comparative evaluation criteria.

Interviews may be required of a short list of consultants who submit acceptable proposals with relatively high rankings. Consultants to be interviewed will be provided advance notice of at least five (5) working days.

Proposals will be reviewed and a consultant chosen by a team consisting of Office of Planning and Development staff, the Mayor's Office staff, and Steering Committee members. The Director and the Senior Land Use Planner in the Office of Planning and Development and the Economic Development Coordinator in the Mayor's Office will be the staff team coordinating the project with the consultants. Those proposals that meet all of the minimum requirements as outlined in this RFP, and are determined to be both responsive (those that offer all of the services requested in the RFP and contain all of the required information and forms properly completed) and responsible (those with the capability, integrity, and reliability to perform under the contract) will be further reviewed using the comparative criteria outlined in this section.

The minimum criteria used for consultant evaluation are the following:

- Planning and technical experience including preparing comprehensive and sustainability plans and comprehensive experience and expertise in integrating land use, economic development, and social equity aspects of community planning. The applicant must have experience with three similar projects with cities of similar population size. If the applicant is a firm, then the lead individual appointed to the project must have similar experience.

- Experience in at least three participatory planning and facilitation in community planning, consensus building, and conflict resolution.
- Ability to create an individual plan unique to Northampton by synthesizing existing plans, information already gathered in the Sustainable Northampton process to date, community input, and best practices in sustainability and comprehensive planning efforts in other communities.
- An approach that is consistent with and builds on the Sustainable Northampton process to date

Comparative Criteria

The committee will use the comparative criterion for each separate rating area, and based upon those criteria, will assign an overall rating to each proposal as permitted under Chapter 30B.

The City reserves the right to award the contract to the responsive and responsible proposal which best meets the City's needs, taking into account proposal quality and proposal price.

A. References

Provide a list of at least three (3) references of which some are preferably municipal governmental entities in Massachusetts and from similar projects, that can be contacted during the RFP process. If proponent has no Massachusetts experience, they must have demonstrated ability to successfully operate in a multitude of states with different planning enabling legislations. All references must be clients for whom the proponent has provided services similar to those outlined in this RFP. Include the reference name, contact person, his/her title, address, phone number, and email address if available.

Highly Advantageous: more than five (5) or more relevant and positive references; at least two (2) municipal government agencies in Massachusetts; three (3) references from similar projects with cities of similar population size; reference information is complete.

Advantageous: Five (5) relevant and positive references; at least one (1) municipal government agencies in Massachusetts; three (3) references from similar projects with cities of similar population size; reference information is complete.

Not Advantageous: less than five (5) relevant and positive references; no government agencies in Massachusetts; less than two (2) clients with relevant services; contact information incomplete.

B. Related Experience

Highly Advantageous: proponent demonstrates in depth knowledge, understanding, and experience with community comprehensive planning, sustainable development principles, conflict resolution, and public consensus building, experience with graphic design, and more than 10 years of experience with developing, conducting, managing, and timely completion of public participation planning processes in communities of similar size and character to Northampton, including those that have colleges and universities with diverse and populations.

Advantageous: proponent demonstrates general knowledge, understanding, and experience with community comprehensive planning, sustainable development principles, conflict resolution

and public consensus building, and 5-10 years of experience with developing, conducting, managing, and timely completion of public participation planning processes in communities of similar size and character to Northampton, including those that have colleges and universities with diverse and hard-to-engage populations.

Not Advantageous: proponent does not demonstrate an in depth knowledge, understanding, or experience with community comprehensive planning, sustainable development principles, conflict resolution and consensus building, and has less than 5 years of similar experience.

C. Response to Scope of Services

Highly Advantageous: Proposal is thorough, well written, presents a clear approach, illustrates consultants superior graphic design ability, appears consistent with project intent, and meets or exceeds the needs expressed by the City. Proposal demonstrates the effectiveness of the proponent's presentation and communication skills.

Advantageous: Proposal is adequate, appears consistent with project intent and meets the needs expressed by the City in most areas. Written and graphic materials are adequate but unexceptional.

Not Advantageous: Proposal is incomplete, vague or poorly written with inadequate graphic content. The proposal is not consistent with expressed needs or project intent.

D. Interview (IF the city holds interviews)

Highly advantageous: Consultant and/or consultant team demonstrates excellent presentation and communication skills of the kind necessary to successfully complete the project.

Advantageous: Consultant and/or consultant team demonstrates adequate presentation and communications skills necessary to complete the project.

Not Advantageous: Consultant and/or consultant team does not demonstrate presentation and communication skills necessary to complete the project.

E. Ability to Complete Project in a Timely Manner

Highly Advantageous: Proposal is clear about how the proponent will work with community volunteers and staff to achieve a successful project within the desired four month timeline. References consistently confirm that the proponent has a superior track record of completing complex community planning projects on time.

Advantageous: Proposal is less than clear about how the proponent will work with community volunteers and staff to complete a successful project in a timely manner but not within four months. References report that the proponent has an adequate record of completing complex community planning projects on time.

Not Advantageous: Proposal is unclear about how the proponent will work with community volunteers and staff to complete a successful project in a timely manner. References report that the proponent has a pattern of failing to complete complex community planning projects on time.

VI. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. *Procedures*

1. Two separate sealed envelopes, one containing an original and seven (7) copies of the non-price technical proposal marked "Non Price Proposal" on the outside of the envelope, and one containing an original and one copy of the price proposal marked "Price Proposal" on the outside of the envelope –must be received by 2:00 p.m. Tuesday October 31, 2006. Send proposals to:

Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Development
Northampton Office of Planning and Development
210 Main Street, Room 11
Northampton, MA 01060

It is the sole responsibility of the proponent to insure that the proposal arrives on time and at the designated place.

2. MGL Chapter 30B requires that price proposals must be separate from technical proposals. No reference to the actual price proposal shall be contained in any portion of the non-price proposal. Failure to adhere to this requirement will result in disqualification. The Price proposal may be submitted in the form of the proponent's choice, but it must have a total cost summary to fully inform the City of the complete cost of this project; including any foreseeable additional charges.
3. All words, signatures and figures submitted in the response shall be in ink. All proposals shall be binding upon the proponent for a minimum of sixty days.

B. *Standard Contract*

Proponents must be willing to sign, substantially as provided herein, the attached Standard Contract of the City of Northampton [see Attachment A].

D. *Plan of Services*

Plan of Services must include the following:

1. A Work Plan proposal paralleling the scope of services in Section III and stating clearly how the consultant will:
 - a. Build on the outreach and public participation initiatives begun in the preceding Sustainable Northampton plan phases.
 - b. Compile, analyze, and summarize the results of surveys and focus groups.
 - c. Identify conflicts between competing public interests in the existing planning efforts undertaken by the City of Northampton. Assist the Steering Committee, Planning Board, and City Council to procedures for addressing or resolving these issues.
 - d. Produce a unique Master Plan in compliance with MGL Chapter 41, Section 81D including incorporating additional elements that may be identified during the planning process. The resulting Master Plan must include participatory mechanisms and a feedback system that facilitates regular review and updating the plan.
2. A Time Line for the completion of the elements in the Work Plan. Indicate start and completion dates in the Time Line. Indicate dates where key milestones or meetings will occur. If not consistent with the desired timeline in this RFP, please explain.

3. A Statement of Qualifications, including the following:
 - a. qualifications and experience demonstrating the required experience and skills.;
 - b. identification of person(s) who will be assigned to this project and the amount of time each will be expected to devote to the project, their role in the project, and their resumes;
 - c. detailed description of related work performed by the consultant and relevant personnel;
 - d. work samples in both written and graphic form; a description of at least three projects similar to Sustainable Northampton. Provide links to websites so that products and documents may be reviewed. Alternatively, products and documents may be submitted via electronic format.
 - e. A minimum of one complete final plan submitted in paper or electronic format.
 - f. names, address and phone numbers of references with experience working with the consultant(s) on similar projects.

E. Bid Form, Non-Collusion and Tax Certification

Each proponent must certify that the proposal is made in good faith and without collusion or fraud and that all state taxes are paid and state tax returns are filed [see Attachment B].

VII. OTHER

- Reports and materials prepared by the consultant are public documents and shall not be copyrighted.
- All proposals, reports and materials become the property of the City of Northampton.
- The City of Northampton reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.

VIII. CONTACT INFORMATION:

For questions or additional information, please contact:

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Northampton, MA 01060

Tel: (413) 587-1265

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Email: Wfeiden@NorthamptonMA.gov

Sustainable Northampton Draft Outline of Plan Elements

Final format, organization and elements of the Plan will be decided jointly by the Steering Committee the consultant and City staff.

Guiding Core Elements: Environment, Economy, Social Equity

- Land Use & Development Patterns
- Environment
- Open Space & Recreation
- Energy and Climate Protection
- Economic Development
- Arts & Culture
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Housing
- Infrastructure/Capital Improvements
- Transportation
- Municipal Governance and Financial Sustainability
- Education
- Community and Social Development